



ICC Editorial Style Guide

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The ICC style guidelines aim to create consistency for usage of all of the aforementioned terms.
If you remain uncertain as to which variation to use on your materials, please contact:

Dawn Chardonnal
Head of Global Communications
E dawn.chardonnal@iccwbo.org



Introduction to ICC style

The **ICC Style Guide** is a set of editorial guidelines that aim to promote consistency and enhance ICC’s external image in all materials written in the name of the International Chamber of Commerce and its entities. This includes the International Court of Arbitration and the World Chambers Federation.

The Guide is an important resource to help establish a consistent ICC voice and applies to all ICC documents and publications. This includes website content, email campaigns, policy statements and recommendations, newsletters, press releases and promotional materials and any formal correspondence. For social media usage, please see the **ICC Social Media and Web Guidelines available on the intranet under “The Essentials”**.

Following the house style for all materials published in the name of ICC is good practice, looks professional, and can resolve issues that cause doubt or disagreement among staff. Users should note that the Guide is not exhaustive and is continually updated to accommodate new or modified conventions and usage. If in doubt, ask a member of the Global Communications and Marketing Department.

Please note that for guidance on ICC logo usage, users should refer to the document **ICC Brand Guidelines available on the ICC Intranet under “The Essentials”**.

Lastly, users can download **branded templates** for Word documents, letterheads, Powerpoint presentations and kakemonos on the [Sharepoint](#).

Quick start guide

Using British English

Use British English for all official ICC documents, including policy positions, statements and guidelines.

While it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list here, a few common examples of differences between British and American vocabulary are shown below. If you are unsure, consult an authoritative online dictionary such as the [Oxford Dictionary](#).

British English/American English equivalent

autumn/fall	railway/railroad
postcode/zip code	windscreen/windshield

Differences between British and American spelling

There are a number of differences in spelling between British and American English. In order to ensure you are using the correct spelling, we suggest you use a British English spell checker in your web browser and/or office software.

British English/American English equivalent

Labour/labor	specialise/specialize
Centre/center	analyse/analyze
organise/organize	travelled/traveled
realise/realize	

Exceptions:

In names of US institutions, leave the American spelling for “Center” and “Program”. American spelling should also be used for UN organisation names and treaties, e.g. World Trade Organization.

The ICC official “blurb”

The official ICC “blurb” is a short profile used to introduce our global institution. It appears on all press releases and should be used on any other materials intended for an external audience. This includes policy statements, recommendations and reports.

About The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) is the institutional representative of more than 45 million companies in over 170 countries. ICC’s core mission is to make business work for everyone, every day, everywhere. Through a unique mix of advocacy, solutions and standard setting, we promote international trade, responsible business conduct and a global approach to regulation, in addition to providing market-leading dispute resolution services. Our members include many of the world’s leading companies, SMEs, business associations and local chambers of commerce.



33-43 avenue du Président Wilson, 75116 Paris, France
T +33 (0)1 49 53 28 28 E icc@iccwbo.org
www.iccwbo.org @iccwbo



10 tips for successful writing

Please take some time to read through the Guide and familiarise yourself with the content.

We do not expect you to know everything after one read but here are 10 best practice tips to get started.

- 1 Use the active voice rather than the passive.
- 2 Economise on words. Readers respond well to short sentences, especially online. A recommended sentence length is 15 to 20 words.
- 3 Use plain language and avoid bureaucratic turns of phrase.
- 4 Keep sentences simple.
- 5 Avoid the use of jargon.
- 6 Spell out acronyms and abbreviations upon first reference and try to avoid cases of ‘alphabet soup’ (e.g. The WBCSD submitted proposals to the UNFCCC and PREPCOM.).
- 7 Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or jargon if you can think of everyday English language.
- 8 Our guide is the [Oxford English Dictionary](#) (OED). For words or phrases not in the OED, do a search on the website to see how they were written in the past and try to remain consistent. We also use the [BBC](#) and [The Economist](#) for guidance if the OED and our website are of no help. Try a search on their websites.
- 9 Check your work to determine: What am I trying to say? Have I said it? Is it clear to the reader? What is the call to action?
- 10 Finish with a final proofread for typos and errors.

Principles of ICC style

Active vs passive voice

Prefer the active voice as a more powerful form of engaging the reader.

Avoid	Do
The agreement was welcomed by ICC.	ICC welcomed the new agreement.

Foreign words and expressions

Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or jargon if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.

Avoid	Do
vis-à-vis	in relation to
inter alia	among other things

Inclusive language

Consult ICC’s inclusive language guidelines for best practices on how to address different audiences while being mindful of their identities. They are available on the Intranet under “[Inside ICC—Diversity, Inclusion, Volunteering—LGBTQIA](#)”.

Long sentences

Make sure that what you write can easily be grasped. Do not allow sentences to ramble on. Start a new sentence instead. Long sentences punctuated with short ones can help to keep reader attention.

Redundancies

Ban unnecessary repetition, i.e. verb/noun/adjective combinations that have a tendency to fill reports and manifestos and are almost always redundant.

Avoid	Do
The working group will prepare and disseminate a report on....	The working group will report on...
broad consensus	consensus
mutual cooperation	cooperation
88 different countries	88 countries
in the eventuality of	if, when, in
in view of the fact that	as, because
with reference to	about, concerning
as a consequence of	because, as
despite the fact that	although, despite
due to the fact that	as, because of, due



Terms

There are some terms and phrases ICC prefers over others. For example:

Avoid	Do
Free markets	Open markets
fair and transparent globalisation	rules-based, open international trade

Rules and conventions

Accents

Avoid accents, e.g. Roberto Azevedo. Exceptions made for ICC certificates and formal correspondence.

If necessary, any foreign words should be written in italics (e.g. *cliché*) and should, exceptionally, be given all proper accents.

Acronyms/abbreviations

- Refer to ICC, WCF, CCS and IMB etc. Not *the* ICC or *the* IMB.
CORRECT: ICC enables business. **INCORRECT:** The ICC enables business.
 - In marketing materials, the abbreviation “ICC” should not be changed, regardless of the language used** e.g. *Chambre de commerce internationale* (ICC). See section [Style guidelines for ICC Court trademarks](#) for exceptions in French.
- Always spell out at first reference, including “International Chamber of Commerce”, “World Trade Organization”, “United Nations”, “Centre of Entrepreneurship”, “Digital Standards Initiative” etc.
 - In subsequent references you can use ICC, WTO, UN, CoE, DSI etc. You can start with ICC in stories that are just for the website or for internal consumption only. Otherwise, stick to the rule. We do not want readers to think we are writing about the International Criminal Court or the International Cricket Council.
 - Do not supply an acronym/abbreviation if there is not a subsequent reference using the acronym within the story.
 - If followed by a noun then do refer to “the ICC Rules”, “the ICC statement” etc.
 - Do not write “don’t” “isn’t” or “won’t” unless you are quoting someone directly. Otherwise, spell it out, unless used for social media or informal communications.

Other common abbreviations:

..., e.g. ... (preceded by a comma)	..., for example, ... (preceded and followed by a comma)
..., etc. ... (preceded by a comma)	..., et cetera. (preceded by a comma)
..., i.e. ... (preceded by a comma)	..., that is to say, ... (preceded and followed by a comma)
p.	page
pp.	pages

Bibliographical referencing

For in-text citations, use the (Harvard) author-date system and ensure that the full citation appears in the list of references at the end of the document. Do not place citations and sources in footnotes.

Rules	Examples
References are cited in the text using the author’s surname and the year of publication between parentheses. Page numbers can also be included.	(Collier, 2012) (ICC, 2013: 72)
When the author’s name is mentioned in the text, only the publication year should be cited in parentheses.	“Studies undertaken by Collier (2012) found that...”
Where several works are cited, each author entry is separated by a semicolon.	(FAO, 2011; ICC, 2011, 2010; Smith, 2012a, 2012b)
For more than three authors, the in-text reference should cite the first author followed by “et al.”.	(Bates et al., 2011)

As a general rule, every bibliographical entry in the list of references should contain:

- author’s surname, initials
 - year of publication (in parentheses, followed by a comma)
 - title of the work in italics
 - title of the series and edition (as appropriate)
- publisher
 - place of publication (city)
 - DOI or URL
 - Full stop

Example: World Bank (2011), “Executive summary”, in *Doing Business Report 2012*, World Bank, Washington, DC.

Bibliographic entries should be provided in alphabetical order according to the authors’ surnames. For more information and examples, consult the [OECD style guide](#).



Bullet points

If preceded by a colon, do not punctuate the listed items:

- meet journalists
- update list
- draft release

Where each item completes the introductory sentence, you should:

- begin with the introductory colon;
- end each item with a semicolon;
- close the list with a full stop.

Capitalisation (See also Headlines)

Use as sparingly as possible, and try to confine to names of things:

- Capitalise ICC titles: Chair, Co-Chair, Past President
- Capitalise titles of institutions and working bodies: Finance Committee, ICC Commission on Banking Technique and Practice, Cargo Coordinating Forum, Task Force.

Examples:

- The Commission on Financial Services and Insurance announced that... (In subsequent references use lower case as in: The commission went on to argue that...)
- The national committee has increased its membership to...
- The working party is to draft a new statement.
- Use Internet and Internet site but web, website etc.
- Use capitals in headlines only when quoting a name or title (see also Headlines).
- G20 Summit: Capitalise “Summit” when referring to the G20 Summit, even if you drop the G20. (Same goes for G8 Summit)
- Sherpas: put in quotes with a capital S.
E.g. ICC is developing policy to deliver global business input on an ongoing basis to the senior G20 government officials, or “Sherpas”, who carry forward each government’s agenda from one Summit to the next.
- Lower case for “member”. E.g. BASIS member, member of the advisory board, UN member state.

Cities

For national capital cities (London, Nairobi) and other well-known cities (Sydney, New York, Toronto) do not note the country.

Collective nouns

Collective nouns take the singular when the emphasis is on the whole entity. For example: The government is considering the matter. The commission was not informed.

Use the plural when the emphasis is on individual members. For example: The police have failed to trace the goods.

Percentages and fractions can take a plural or singular verb. For example:

Often, if the word that follows the fraction or percentage is singular, you’ll use a singular verb. If the word following the fraction is plural, use a plural verb.

- Two-thirds/25% of the lemonade **has** been finished.
- Two-thirds/25% of the participants **have** already registered.

At ICC, we use “data” as a singular noun.

Countries

Attribute the city not the country to organisations FAO, Rome; World Bank, Washington D.C.

Put the country after the organisation, not the person John Smith, Jane Doe Engineering Company, Canada.

Court of Arbitration references (See also Style guidelines for the use of “the ICC International Court of Arbitration”)

When referring to ICC Arbitration as the service use uppercase ‘A’. Never mention specific ICC cases in articles related to the ICC Court.

Refer to the ICC International Court of Arbitration subsequently as the ICC Court and to the ICC Rules of Arbitration as the ICC Rules and always use uppercase.

The ICC Court does not decide the matters submitted to arbitration. The ICC Court oversees the application of the ICC Rules of Arbitration which the arbitrators act under. The arbitrators decide on the case.

Currency

The correct way is: US\$600 billion, not USD600, or €400, not EUR400 or 400€.



Dates and time

The right way is city/day/month/year. For example: London, 13 September 2003. If you have to mention dates in the article, it is always 13 September never September 13 or 13th September. Add the country too if the place is not a capital or well-known city. As Macclesfield, England, 29 June 2003.

We write 3 pm and 7:15 am. (Not 3 p.m. or 7:15 a.m. and not 1500 hours or 7h15.) Use noon and midnight—never 12 noon, which is repetitive or 12 pm, which is confusing. In event programmes, use the 24-hour format.

Figures and tables

When including tables and figures, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the presentation really enhance the information in the text?
- Are the tables and figures concise and simple? A series of short tables may be more useful than one long, complex table.
- Do the tables and figures use consistent terminology, headers, subheaders, units, legends, abbreviations and formats?
- Are the titles pertinent, short and clear?
- Have the tables and figures been properly numbered and added to the list of tables and figures in the front matter?
- Have abbreviations been explained where necessary and added to the list of abbreviations in the front matter?
- Have the source(s) of the data been provided in full? (see also [Bibliographical references](#))
- Has copyright permission been obtained?
- Have the ICC font and brand colours been used correctly?

Fonts

See ICC Design and Logo guidelines **available on the intranet under** “[The Essentials](#)”.

Headlines (See also [Capitalisation](#))

We follow British newspaper practice, not American, and use sentence case in web story titles and titles of other publications such as reports, briefings, etc.

- e.g. Business group slams spam
- ICC hails historic deal not ICC Hails Historic Deal

Try to keep headlines short, use active voice and sentence case. Titles are for grabbing attention. Do not try to explain the entire story in the title. Title length is restricted on our website.

Include a verb if possible. Avoid using the same phrase that appears in the first paragraph of the story. For an ICC website story, the title does not have to have ICC in the title.

If a title includes a colon, the first word following a colon should be capitalised.

Italics

Use italics for titles of books and newspapers but not for reports, recommendations, rules, guidelines and codes (*The Economist*, *the Financial Times*, *War and Peace* etc. as opposed to ICC policy statement on Freedom of Commercial Communications, ICC Trade Register etc.).

Use for foreign words and expressions except in the case of proper nouns (*cliché*, *communiqué*, Deutsche Bank).

More than vs over

ICC uses them interchangeably in countable numerical expressions meaning “in excess of” or “over”. This is consistent with usage supplied by The Concise Oxford Dictionary.

It defines “over” as: beyond; more than (bids of over US\$50; are you over 18?).

It defines “more than” as: a greater quantity, number or amount (more than three people; more to it than meets the eye).

Sometimes there may be a preference for one or the other for space reasons or because one sounds better than the other in a particular sentence.

Names

In an alphabetical list of names, Asian surnames should be written first, followed by first name/s as in the following example:

Madeleine Albright

Ban Ki-moon

Winston Churchill

Kim Jong-Il

When a Western first name is combined with an Asian surname the person should be listed in the Western style as in the following example:

Madeleine Albright

Ban Ki-moon

Winston Churchill

Victor Fung

Kim Jong-Il

Larry Yung

Numerals

Write out whole numbers from one to nine and use digits for numbers 10 and above, except when followed by million, billion etc. For example:

- I have two tickets to tonight's football match.
- This year I received 25 birthday presents.
- The deal is expected to inject 5 million into the global economy.
- This applies also to ordinals (first—ninth) in text form but not in titles, e.g. 5th Asia Pacific Forum

Spell out numerals at the beginning of a sentence although every effort should be made to recast the sentence.

- e.g. Change “200 participants attended the event last year” to “Last year, 200 participants attended the event.”

Roman numerals should be used for wars and sequences of people

- e.g. World War II, King Henry VIII etc.

Use figures for expressing money, decimals and percentages. The economy grew by 3%. What can I buy for US\$1?

Use commas according to international style:

1,000

10,000

100,000

Other usages:

One-hundred year history

One-and-a-half day conference

Percentages

We use the symbol %. Do not write per cent or percent.

Plurals

The Oxford English dictionary gives the following definition for the plural of forum:

- 1 Forum (pl. forums) a meeting or medium for the exchange of views
- 2 Forum (pl. fora) (in an ancient Roman city) a public square or marketplace used for judicial and other business.

Therefore, use ‘forums’ in ICC materials—unless of course you are referring to ancient Rome.

Here are some other uses of plurals to note:

addendum	addenda
agenda	agendas
appendix	appendices
colloquium	colloquiums
criterion	criteria
data	data
index	indexes (of books)
index	indices (of indicators, index numbers)
secretary general	secretaries general
symposium	symposia



Punctuation

Apostrophes

The contracted form of ‘it is’ is ‘it’s’. Use it only in direct quotes (see section on [Acronyms/abbreviations](#)). ‘Its’ without the apostrophe is a possessive pronoun.

- Example: The organisation clearly stated its position.

Do not use apostrophes in plural dates and abbreviations, e.g. 1930s, NGOs.

Commas

You can say: ICC Chair Joe Soap today applauded recent government moves...

Do not write: ICC Chair, Joe Soap, today.... If you want to use commas, it should be: The Chair of ICC, Joe Soap, today said.

Do not use a comma before “and”, at the end of a sequence of items, unless one of the items includes another “and”. For example: The conference brought together tax experts, government representatives and activists. But: The conference brought together tax experts, activists and civil society, and an ICC delegation.

Use two commas, or none at all, when inserting a clause in the middle of a sentence. For example: And, though they had negotiated for weeks, they did not reach a binding agreement. But, when activists took to the streets, they resumed negotiations.

Use a comma before conjunctions such as ‘but’, ‘yet’, ‘while’ or ‘so’ to merge two separate sentences. For example: The committee agreed on a final text, but members still need to vote.

Colons

Use a colon before a whole quoted sentence. She said: “It will never work.”

When a colon precedes a full sentence, follow the colon with a capital letter and end the sentence with a full stop, e.g. The decision was made: The newly elected members will meet in January.

Hyphens (See also [Titles](#))

Limit use of hyphens.

Hyphenate

- when trying to dispel ambiguity: e.g. a “large motor industry”, a large industry producing motors as opposed to a “large-motor industry”, an industry producing large motors

Do not hyphenate

- adverb-adjective modifiers when the adverb ends in -ly, e.g. newly released publication (or simply a new publication)
- adverb-adjective modifiers when ‘ever’ is followed by a comparative adjective, e.g. ever closer partnership
- Many phrases are treated as compounds, and thus need a hyphen, only when used as modifiers, e.g. up-to-date brochure, but the brochure is up to date or long-term effects, but effects in the long term

Quotations

Avoid fragmented quotes if possible. Do not say: The president of the national committee said he was “very happy” at the latest news from the WTO.

Use quotes sparingly. Indirect speech is better to clarify meaning and gives more flexibility. Quotes should be used when the speaker or writer uses clear language that adds colour and context to a story.

When introducing quotes, we use colons, not commas, e.g. The president said: “This report is totally unacceptable.”

Quotations are introduced using the past tense e.g. “Joe Bloggs said”, “he added” etc. If a quotation is introduced by a colon, punctuation is placed within the quotation marks, e.g.:

IMB Director Michael Howlett said: “Everybody connected with shipping is under enormous pressure these days as governments, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and other authorities impose ever tighter security requirements for cargoes, shipping and ports. There is an urgent need for expert advice and our two organisations can provide it.”

- If a quotation extends to a second paragraph quotation marks are omitted at the end of the first paragraph but opened again at the start of the second para, e.g.:

A further vital issue for the shipping industry is adjusting to changed security perceptions worldwide after 9/11. Captain Mukundan said: “The essential nature of the threat has changed. Risk and potential targets used to be assessed on the basis of the intrinsic value of cargoes and the ships carrying them. That no longer applies.

“The main focus now has to be the strategic intentions of terrorist groups. Those responsible for security of ports and ships have to put themselves in the minds of terrorists and ask: ‘How attractive a target do we present in terms of terrorist objectives?’”

If a quotation is included as part of a longer sentence (but not introduced with a colon) punctuation marks are placed outside the quotation marks (except question marks).



Spacing

No double space to mark a new sentence

No space before colon, question and exclamation marks!

Titles (See also Hyphens)

We say ... Joseph Soap ... in the first reference and Mr Soap thereafter. Not Mr Joseph Soap.

Note: No full stop after Mr; all women are Ms ... never Miss or Mrs unless specifically requested. This also applies to presidents. E.g. Barack Obama becomes Mr Obama not President Obama.

Use Dr only for qualified medical people, unless the correct alternative is not known or it would seem perverse to use Mr. And try to keep Professor for those who hold chairs, not just a university job or an inflated ego.

Use upper case when written in conjunction with a name, but lower case when on their own: Vice-President Cheney, but the vice-president.

We do not use a hyphen in titles such as Secretary General and Chief Executive:

- e.g. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon,

BUT do hyphenate Co-Chair, Vice-Chair, Vice-President etc.

Full stops in titles only for middle initials. E.g. Victor K. Fung

Speller

A

Among not amongst
antitrust
anti-money laundering
anti-corruption

B

best-selling, best-seller
biannual = taking place two times in one year
biennial = taking place one time every two years
Business-20 (B20 in subsequent references)

C

cargo owners
CCS gives (CCS = singular)
clearing house
Co-Chair
Combating
Comprise (not comprise of)
computer implemented inventions
coordinating
cross-border
crime-fighting body
cybercrime
cyber security
Côte d’Ivoire (accents used in all references)

D

decision-maker
decision-making
Doha round
Do’s and don’ts
double taxation

E

e-mail, e-business, e-commerce
eastern and central Europe
end-customer
Eurozone

F

focusing
follow-up
forums instead of fora (unless referring to a public square or marketplace in an ancient Roman city)

G

G20

H

high-level conference

I

ICC members
ICTs
intergovernmental
Internet is capitalised but information society is not.

J

judgments

M

masterclass(es)
micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprise (MSMEs)
money laundering
multistakeholder

O

online



P	W
policymaker	Website (not web site or web-site)
policy-making	well-informed
practicing lawyer	While not whilst
R	worldwide
rule-making, rules-writer, rules-writing, rules-based, rules-setting	World Chambers Congress spell out wherever possible (exceptions for social media possible).
run-up	
S	
self-regulation	
Secretary General pl form = secretaries general	
Sherpas: put in quotes with a capital S. “Sherpas”	
supply chain security	
small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)	
Start-up (n, adj) or start up (v). Not startup.	
e.g. Britons are more likely to start up new businesses than people in any other leading industrial country except the United States.	
Up to 1,500 jobs could be created in Northumberland, under plans for a new business park and business start-up centre.	
T	
think-tank	
Türkiye	
turnkey	
U	
UN Secretary General	
US—not U.S., USA or U.S.A	
V	
value-added tax	
Vice-Chair	

Style guidelines for use of “the ICC International Court of Arbitration” and “the ICC International Centre for ADR”

The acronym “ICC” should not be changed, regardless of the language used e.g. Chambre de commerce international (ICC). “ICC International Court of Arbitration”, “International Court of Arbitration”, “Cour internationale d’arbitrage de la CCI”, and “Cour internationale d’arbitrage” are all trademarks belonging to ICC and an exception to this rule when used in French. In order to maintain our rights to them, we must use, and prove usage of them, on our print and online materials. It is strongly recommended that registered trademarks are followed by the sign ® at least once in your materials.

“International Centre for ADR” and “ICC International Centre for ADR” are not ICC- registered trademarks and do not require usage of the ® symbol. Usage should clearly establish a link with ICC. For this reason, it is important to use the full name “the ICC International Centre for ADR” at least once. Subsequently, either “the International Centre for ADR” or, to avoid repetitiveness, “the Centre” may be used. Be careful, however, to avoid any risk of confusion with other “centres” such as the ICC International Centre for Expertise or the ICC Dispute Board Centre.

International Court of Arbitration

- On letterheads, business cards and any other stationery where used in close proximity to the ICC logo the following should be used:

French—Cour internationale d’arbitrage

English—International Court of Arbitration
- On publications it is recommended to use the following:

French Front cover (or where full ICC logo appears) Cour internationale d’arbitrage

French—Back cover (or where there is no logo) Cour internationale d’arbitrage de la CCI

English—Front cover (or where full ICC logo appears) International Court of Arbitration

English—Back cover (or where there is no logo) ICC International Court of Arbitration
- In body texts the following applies*:

French—On first reference “Cour internationale d’arbitrage de la CCI”, then for subsequent references “Cour internationale d’arbitrage” or, where appropriate, “la Cour”.

English—On first reference “ICC International Court of Arbitration”, then for subsequent references “International Court of Arbitration” or, where appropriate, “the Court”

*NB: With the exception of ICC Rules which must adhere to terms defined within them.



International Centre for ADR

- On letterhead, business cards and any other stationery where used in close proximity to the ICC logo the following should be used:

French—Centre international d’ADR

English—International Centre for ADR

- On publications it is recommended to use the following:

French—Front cover (or where full ICC logo appears) Centre international d’ADR

French—Back cover (or where there is no logo) Centre international d’ADR de la CCI

English—Front cover (or where full ICC logo appears) International Centre for ADR

English—Back cover (or where there is no logo) ICC International Centre for ADR

- In body texts the following applies:

French—“Centre international d’ADR de la CCI” should be used at least once. Subsequently, either “Centre international d’ADR” or, to avoid repetitiveness, “the Centre” may be used.

English—“ICC International Centre for ADR” should be used at least once. Subsequently, either “the International Centre for ADR” or, to avoid repetitiveness, “the Centre” may be used.



33-43 avenue du Président Wilson, 75116 Paris, France
T +33 (0)1 49 53 28 28 E icc@iccwbo.org
www.iccwbo.org  [@iccwbo](https://twitter.com/iccwbo)